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RECENT ARTICLES ON RELIGION IN THE USSR

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FOREWORD

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RECENT ARTICLES ON RELIGION IN THE USSR

[Following is the translation of seven articles from Nauka i Religiya, No 3, March 1961. The authors and the page numbers in the original source are given at the beginning of each article.]

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THE TREACHERY OF THE ADHERENTS OF THE CROSS

[Following is the translation of an article by A. Shamaro in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, March 1961, pages 38-43.]

Under the Wing of the Occupiers

Of State Importance.

Top secret.

Berlin, 27 April 1942

On the Question of Belorussians

According to plan 75% of the Belorussian population are to be deported from the occupied territory. This means that, according to the plans of the Central Office of Reich Security, 25% of the Belorussians are subject to Germanization.

"The racially undesirable Belorussian population will remain in the Belorussian territory for several years. In this connection it is extremely important to select, as carefully as possible, the Nordic-type Belorussians who would be racially and politically suitable for Germanization and to send them to the Reich to be used as manpower ...

"The next question deals with the place to which those Belorussians racially unsuitable for Germanization should be deported. According to the general plan they must also be resettled in West Siberia."

This sinister document uncovered after the victory over fascism in the most secret archives of Hitler's Reich is now well known. But then, 19 years ago, in the flaming 1942 it was hidden in the steel safe of Hitler's Reich office and only the Fuehrer himself and his closest henchmen knew about it. Other secret documents were kept behind the heavy doors of the strongrooms in Berlin. All of these blood-freezing "plans" "Memoranda" and "Considerations," together with the cannibalistic orders were kept in the most secret corners of Hitler's lair "to be put into action" immediately upon the "lightning victory" over the Red Army.

On 2 September 1942 a telegram from Minsk was received at this Reich office:

"To the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler:

On behalf of the Belorussians of the Orthodox faith, the first in history All-Belorussian Orthodox Church Council in Minsk, is sending you, Herr Reich-Chancellor, its heartfelt gratitude for the liberation of Belorussia from the Moscow Bolsheviks godless yoke and for granting us the freedom to organize our religious life in the form of the Holy Belorussian

Orthodox Autocephalous Church. With wishes for a speedy and complete victory of your invincible armed forces.

Archbishop Filofey
Bishop Afanasily
Bishop Stefan"

Traitors in cassocks arranging their treacherous convention in occupied Minsk called themselves the "Autocephalous Council."

They sent a delegation to general commissar Kube to thank him for his assistance in the preparation of the convention and promised to work tirelessly at the "spiritual rehabilitation" of the Belorussian people.

The treacherous "Autocephalia" was established on 2 September 1942. The same evening the bishops and priests, together with the "laymen" -- elders and policemen -- heard a "spiritual concert."

Maybe these bishops and priests did not know the real face of Hitler's occupiers or did not hear of what was happening in Belorussia, in whose behalf they spoke? ...

No, that could not have been so! ...

Of the ten-million population of Belorussia, the Hitlerites exterminated 1,400,000 civilians and 800,000 prisoners of war. They burned 209 cities, 9,200 towns and villages, 1,136 hospitals, and all libraries. Minsk was 80% destroyed, Vitebsk 90%. The total material loss inflicted on Belorussia by the fascist invasion amounted to 75 billion rubles.

In the village of Khatayevichi the "Reich authorities" to whom "autocephalous" servants sent so many deeply-grateful letters, drove all the residents (304 persons) into a barn and set it on fire. When the barn was in flames, the chastisers opened the door and shot at point-blank range anyone who tried to escape.

In September 1941, exactly one year before declaration of "autocephalia," the Hitlerites annihilated 200 patients in a suburban hospital in Novinka. They locked them up in the bathroom, inserted -- through the holes in the doors -- hoses connected to automobile exhausts, and poisoned them with carbon monoxide gas.

The fascists took from an orphanage to the cemetery 150 children and executed them, drowning their death cries with the blaring of a brass band. How can one believe in the assurances of the biblical Christ who said about children: "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew, 18:14)?

Belorussia was indeed the land of the people's heroic struggle against the fascist invasion. Over 370,000 patriots fought with the guerilla groups were organized behind the German lines. Soviet authority was restored and over 400,000 Soviet people found secure refuge in those areas. During the period of three years the people's avengers exterminated and wounded about 500,000 of Hitler's soldiers and officers, blew up 11,000 trains, destroyed 8,319 locomotives, 305 aircraft, 1,355 tanks and armored cars, and demolished 948 headquarters and garrisons.

Was it possible not to see in all of that the soul and the

thoughts of the people? Members of the "Autocephalous Council" listening to the "spiritual concert" knew well the real face of the "liberators" and realized what the real feelings of the people were. They saw and knew, and...committed a treachery.

Who are they?

"Father Konstantin" (Aleksandrovskiy) was minister in a place called Novyy Sverzhen'. He joined a treacherous nationalist organization BNS (Belorusskaya Narodnaya Samopomoshch' -- Belorussian Peoples' Self-Reliance), extracted from his parishioners warm clothing and provisions for Hitler's army, denounced Soviet authority from the pulpit, and praised the "new Order."

"Father Dmitriy" (Survillo) fraternized with Hitler's officers and arranged frequent parties for them at his home.

"Father Vyacheslav" (Lopatinskiy) joined the BNS, collaborated with Hitler's intelligence, and appropriated belongings of the Soviet people executed by the fascist chastisers.

Other members of the Council followed the example of these "priests." Archbishop Filofey (Narko), Chairman of the Council, especially distinguished himself. His "sermons" praising the "great Fuehrer -- Chancellor Adolf Hitler" were broadcast by the radio of the occupation forces.

Filofey blessed the occupiers of Mogilev...Mogilev's Commandant, Erdmansdorf, drove 6,000 defenseless women, old people and children out to the bank of the Dnepr to expose them to the fire of the advancing Soviet Army so as to delay its movement. Hundreds of residents of Mogilev were driven by the occupiers through a minefield in order to "clear the way" for Hitler's armed units.

Filofey also blessed the murder by the fascists of the honest Orthodox priests; Priest Vladimir Nazarevskiy so perished.

"Dear Young People and Laborers:

Answer the call inviting you to go to Great Germany, that large school of labor and trade, so that -- by relieving the German soldier at the factories, plants and in agriculture, and through conscientious work -- you can learn to become a good worker and specialist and, upon return home, occupy an honorable position in the building of our fatherland -- Belorussia.

Archbishop Filofey,
Acting Metropolitan, Belorussian Orthodox Church
3 November 1942"

Such was the appeal addressed by Archbishop Filofey to the Belorussians (you can see the original of this "appeal" in Belorussian language in the photograph). Thus an orthodox archpriest helped Hitler's slaveowners chase the Soviet people to join the forced labor ranks in Germany. During the period of the occupation the Hitlerites sent to hard labor 380,000 persons and forcibly removed about 25,000 Belorussian children.

At present, Filofey as well as other "priests" and "archpriests" are ending their days in emigration.

All of them, no doubt, would like to bury this disgraceful story in oblivion so that nobody would ever remember it. But the blood of the heroes and martyrs of the past war cries to use to remember this.

"...There is no power but of God..." (Romans 13:1)

Having read of the treacherous "council" the faithful would possibly say: "Yes, certainly there is no excuse, but these bishops and priests discarded the gospel, forgot it."

Is that so? Let us think this question over.

Let us go back to the past, at least half a century ago... Pre-revolutionary Belorussia. Area of poverty and adversity. Dirty, ramshackle cabins in the forests and swamps. Illiterate, exhausted peasants. Eternal diseases and hunger...

Many times the Belorussians attempted to fight this crying injustice, to fight for a better life. And those who -- as the saying goes -- "had the authority and the gold" did everything possible to keep the peasants under a yoke, so that they forever remained blind and deaf. And the religion, the Orthodox Church, was their best assistant. The priests and monks would open the "holy book" and announce to the faithful from the pulpit:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness rewarding His servants by giving land to the monasteries and temples, paying generous salaries from the state treasury, and giving them full right to educate children 'in the fear of God.'"

In the fall of 1917 a new regime -- the Soviet, people's regime -- took power in Russia. Literally one of the first steps of the new government of the workmen and peasants was complete separation of the church and state, because only those governments that oppress the people need the religion and the church.

The state confiscated land from the monasteries, stopped paying salaries from the treasury and completely abolished religious education in schools.

[Caption to photograph, page 40]. In their telegram to "Fuehrer Adolf Hitler" the organizers of the "Autocephalous Council" wrote that they were speaking "on behalf of the Orthodox Belorussians." But they knew that the Belorussian people, including ordinary believers, considered them traitors and, therefore, they were hiding behind the members of the Gestapo and the SS. They had courage to come to the "spiritual concert" only under guard of Hitler's officers and soldiers.

[Caption to Photograph, page 41]. Palm Sunday in the Spring of 1944. "Good Christians" -- bishops of the "Autocephalous Church," heads of "Belorusskaya Tsentral'naya Rada" (BTsR) and the SS officers, gathered together in a country house which was guarded by German machine-gunners.

The speech was made by the (standing) executioner of the Belorussian people, SS General von Gotberg.

A cobweb-like swastika on the chest of the obergruppenfehrer (Senior Group Leader) is seen between the branches of the pussy willow symbolizing the palm branches with which -- according to the New Testament legend -- the residents of Jerusalem greeted Christ. They symbol of "Christian love" and the symbol of the greatest brutality and cruelty that the mankind ever knew, united over this festively decorated table. The SS badges sparkle in the lapels of the Hitler's officers, next to the cross on Panteylemon's white cowl...

Thousands of women, children and old people were shot and burned alive in the cabins by order of the "hospitable host" SS obergruppenfehrer von Gotberg.

During that stormy epoch the servants of the church split. Those who had the interests of the people at heart, have -- after a long period of hesitation -- recognized the new Soviet power which won a decisive victory over the Russian White Guards and foreign interventionists. Others did not wish to part with the century-old privileges of the church with its social predestinations and damned the revolution and the regime created in its furnace. They changed the well-known apostolic commandment thus: "There is no power without God...except for that which can do without Him." Many of such priests and bishops emigrated abroad where they are awaiting the return of the "good old days." Organizers of the "Autocephalous Council" are among them.

One night in June 1941, Hitler's hordes invaded Soviet Belorussia. On their bayonets they carried the "new order" and restoration of the old pre-revolutionary life, enslavement of the people by the latter-day landlords and factory owners. The authorities which were established in the occupied Belorussian territories needed religion, with its everlasting sermons about "humbleness" and "forgiveness."

Let us look at yet another document from the secret archives of Hitler's "Reich." Its title, "Certain considerations about handling the local population of the eastern oblasts (provinces)." It is signed by Reich Fehrer, Himmler of the SS Forces. This is what it says:

"The non-German population of the eastern regions should not have high schools. The existence of the four-grade schools should be sufficient. Maximum education in these schools should be only: simple counting (not to exceed 500), knowing how to sign one's name, suggestion that God's commandment demands subordination to the Germans, being honest, diligent, and obedient (Underscored by me. A. S.). This population will represent a leaderless mass of manpower and will annually supply Germany with the seasonal laborers for unskilled work (road-building, stone quarrying, construction work)."

Contemplating liquidation of the Belorussians as a nation, the Hitlerites hoped that they would be assisted in that by the "Christian commandments": "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use

you." (Matthew, 5:43,44).

In accordance with the "Reichsfuehrer's" orders, the occupation forces brought with them to Minsk bishops and priests from abroad. And the "spiritual healers" of the Belorussian people settled down to their favorite and familiar business which had been interrupted by the revolution a quarter of a century ago.

Prior to the convention of their "Autocephalous Council" the "spiritual healers" composed a lengthy epistle in German to "His Excellency, the General Commissar of Belorussia," in which it was written, in part:

"We, the undersigned bishops of the Belorussian Orthodox Church are united by deep feeling of gratitude to the great Fuehrer of the German people, Adolf Hitler, and the invincible German Army for the opportunity given us to kindle the light of the faith in Christ...

...In order to uphold the authority of our ministers, it is necessary to create a climate of financial independence from the parishioners. In Tsarist times and during the Polish rule, the ministers were given the opportunity of care-free life. They had the following income:

1) Church and community land, 2) salaries for teaching religion, 3) income from church services, 4) income from keeping census records, and 5) monthly subsidy from the government.

In order to support the clergy in their responsible activities, each parish should release 33 hectares of land: 22 hectares for the priests and 11 hectares for the church attendants.

All of the above is submitted to your Excellency with a hope for your approval:

Archbishop Filofey
Acting Metropolitan, Bishop Afanasiy
Bishop Stefan."

The same was written in their by-laws: "The Orthodox Church of Belorussia bases its activities on the teachings of Christ, the spiritual rehabilitation of the population, and preservation of law and order maintained by the imperial authorities. Therefore, the Orthodox clergy have the right -- especially during the present difficult time -- to accept financial support from the Reich authorities.

"The amounts of the funds assigned to the Orthodox Church are being determined by the General Commissar of Belorussia.

"All immovable church property (buildings, land) confiscated by the Soviet authorities will be returned to the monasteries and churches upon their restoration."

The "autocephalous bishops" didn't forget yet another privilege which had been taken away from them by the socialist revolution -- the right to teach "God's Law" [Holy Bible] in schools. About restoration of this right they also respectfully requested "his excellency," thus: "The Orthodox ministers request permission to teach religion to the children in schools. Teaching religion in schools is the best weapon

against Bolshevism."

As you can see, the organizers of the "independent" Belorussian Church began their activities in full agreement with both the commandments of the "Holy Scriptures" and the "principles of the Reich authorities." Only, no agreement was obtained from the Belorussian people in whose behalf they spoke with such self-confidence. The people rising for the sacred war of liberation, recognized them as traitors.

Spirit of Christian Humility and Spirit of Patriotic Struggle

The believers will probably ask yet another question. "Possibly, you have forgotten," they will say, "that during the last war, the Russian Orthodox Church conducted patriotic activities?..."

Patriotic acts of the Russian Orthodox Church during the years of the Patriotic War are well-known. Everyone knows that the bishops and parish priests addressed to the people patriotic appeals and that the Orthodox churches made collections among the parishioners for the defense fund. And none of us -- either during the war, or now -- would doubt the sincerity of those kind words and kind deeds. However, haven't you thought of the fact that these activities had no connection whatsoever with religious teachings? Did religion really inspire these noble words and deeds?

Let us leaf through the collection of patriotic appeals which the Orthodox bishops and priests made during the years of the war trials and tribulations. You may read scores of pages and hardly ever see any reference to the "Holy Scriptures." Is this a coincidence? Obviously not. Apparently, the spirit of Christian teaching -- the spirit of subservient humility, forgiveness, and "love for your enemies" are incompatible with the spirit of heroic fight for the honor and freedom of one's country.

Indeed!

Can one use as a banner of the just war of liberation, the hopeless despair of the peoples of Roman Empire depicted on the pages of the "New Testament?"

Can you write on such a banner the words of Jesus Christ: "... I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." (Matthew, 5:39-40). Even deeply religious people would not have served under such banners during the years of the past war!

Would it be possible for the people sincerely believing that their native land -- for which one would probably have to die on the battlefield -- is just a "value of sorrow and grief," to become brave and tenacious defenders of their fatherland?

Is it possible to be fighting selflessly for the victory and, at the same time, believe in Christ's appeal: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself..." (Matthew, 6:34).

The answer is obvious: No, no and once again no!

None of the books of the "New Testament" say anything at all about the selfless love for the country or about defending it from encroachment of the enemy. On the contrary, the mythical Apostle Paul -- whose word is revered almost as much as the word of Jesus Christ -- called upon the faithful: "Think of heaven, not of earth." The Apostle John taught despicion of life on earth, saying: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (John, 2:15,16).

"The fascist beast," says one of the appeals of the Russian Orthodox Church, published during the last war, "will be soon destroyed and our country will enjoy the peaceful and happy life. 'All they that take up the sword shall perish with the sword', said our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us refer to the passage in the "New Testament," from which this quotation was taken, and open Chapter 26 of the "Gospel according to St. Matthew." It tells of how Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas in Jerusalem and arrested on orders of the high priests.

"...Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take up the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew, 26:50,52).

It was in this light that the quotation was used in the appeal and this is its real meaning... The traitor betrayed his teacher to the enemy and nobody should raise the sword against violence, because everything is "God's will." These words do not call the people to fight foreign aggressors but, on the contrary, warn against resisting violence. Thus, the real meaning of the quotation from the Gospel is exactly opposite to the sense which the author of the appeal tried to impart.

In the grim years of the war, the ordinary faithful as well as the honest and patriotic clergymen did their share in the common struggle for what was right, having discarded religious commandments about "humility," "non-resistance to the enemy," and "forgiveness." And once again it confirms the fact that the majority of the faithful in our country do not live by religious laws but by the laws and requirements of the Soviet life.

At this point we may terminate our discussion... It is to be hoped that the faithful should ponder the question of whether the Scripture is really the great, life-giving truth when it contains so many justifications of treachery and subjugation of the people and says nothing -- or hardly anything -- about defending the fatherland and fighting for the happiness of the people?

[Caption to Photograph, page 43]. Photostate copy of the "greeting telegram" sent to Hitler by the "Council of the Orthodox Belorussian Church." Some member of the Gestapo must have "edited" the telegram which the "spiritual fathers" readily signed using their magnificen titles, in German.

REVELATIONS OF THE "TALLIN WORKMAN"

(Baptists adapt themselves)

-USSR-

[Following is the translation of an article by M. Barykin in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, March 1961, pages 48-56.]

In a Crooked Mirror

Since the Baptists falsify and distort so inexcusably the basic origin of their dogma -- the Bible -- it is, of course, senseless to expect from them an objective interpretation of the views of the differently minded or of the facts of natural and social phenomena. The lecture-debate confirms this completely. How everything is distorted here! As though the whole world, the entire reality around us are reflected in a crooked mirror.

For instance, during the debate, the "Tallin workman" spoke to his scientist-opponents as follows:

"You say that God created the heavenly luminary bodies, while you, the godless, created earthly luminaries -- electrical suns, blinding floodlights... Please note that the earthly luminaries were not created by you, but by us, Christians, because Edison, the American inventor of the first electric bulb, was a deeply religious man... On the other hand, you, the godless, invent and create not the suns or stars, but guns, machine-guns and bombs -- your favorite weapons -- for the extermination of men. All that is the best in science, all of the most delicate inventions and discoveries were made by the people who had the fear of God."

To term these words a simple distortion of the facts would be putting it mildly. It is a vile slander impregnated with a helpless malice against atheism in general and against the Soviet state and its peaceful policy, in particular.

The Communist Party has set as a major goal of its activity the building of the most just society on earth. During the transition from socialism to communism, all the remnants of the past exploiting regime, including religion, must die off. This is the reasons why the communists have been, and are, waging a persistent struggle against religious prejudice. But our party never divided the people into groups according to their attitude toward religion and did not consider the faithful as lower-category citizens as opposed to non-believers. We do not ask an inventor or a scientist who has made an important discovery whether or

not he believes in God. The Soviet people who are atheists, respect the memory of the great American inventor T. Edison. But why attribute to him what he didn't do?

It is common knowledge that the electric incandescent lamp was invented not by T. Edison, but by the Russian scientist Aleksand Nikolayevich Lodygin. He first used it for lighting in St. Petersburg in 1873. Only after Lieutenant A. M. Khotinskiy of the Russian Navy demonstrated Lodygin's bulb for him, did Edison modify the lamp. He patented these modifications in 1879. Edison himself laid claim only to the "perfection of electric lighting installation." (Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya [Large Soviet Encyclopedia], Vol 24, page 265.)

For the purposes of propagating a rotten "theory" it was advantageous to the Baptists to insist that only faithful Christians can discover and invent. For this reason the Baptists are prepared to disregard the achievements of their country and fellow citizens. They close their eyes to the greatest achievements of their national science which pushed it during the years of the Soviet regime from the world's backyard to first place. They close their eyes because Soviet science is being moved ahead by the atheists led by the atheistic Communist Party in the atheistic state.

Even our enemies from the capitalist camp recognize the superiority of Soviet science and technology in many branches of creative human endeavor. The Baptists, on the other hand, attribute to the godless the ability to create only the weapons of destruction of the people. What a dirty slander!

Who was the first to drop the atom bomb that annihilated hundreds of thousands of innocent residents of Hiroshima? Who gave orders to commit that greatest evil deed? Former US President Harry Truman, a well-known Baptist.

What are the main purposes of the American imperialists who fabricate their ballistic missiles with a prayer on their lips? Military purposes, first of all. During the past several years American military experts orbited several space spy satellites.

The Soviet atheistic state was the first to propose a plan for a universal and complete disarmament aimed at elimination of any possibility of new wars. Acceptance of this plan is being objected to by the governments of the capitalist countries which plume themselves on their adherence to the Christian religion. Among them first place is occupied by the US, where Baptism is particularly widespread.

Such are the facts which cannot be distorted by any demagogy.

It is significant that, officially, in the sermons, the leaders of the Evangelist Sect of Christian Baptists babble about the near-coincidence of the ideals of Baptism and Communism and, seemingly are ready to praise the peaceful policy of the Soviet state. On the other hand, secretly, by means of unlawful missionary activities they spread entirely different ideas. What hypocrisy!

The moral appearance of the Soviet people is crudely distorted. After listening to the "Tallin workman" one might think that -- except for the Baptists -- we have no decent people. Baptism is being singled

out as a sort of a well of wisdom and moral principles, necessary not only for the salvation of the "soul" but for our purely earthly existence. It appears as though only this sectarian teaching can save mankind from the complete moral degradation and decay.

"Our human morals and moral principles are in great danger which stems from the godlessness," a preacher announces thoughtfully.

As a confirmation of this thought he attempts to prove, first of all, that a man who deserted the religion will almost inevitably end up as a criminal. According to the preacher, anyone who has lost faith in God assumes that "anything is permissible." "Since there is no God and no sin -- anything is permissible, even committing a crime." He gives two examples. In one example two American students deserted religion and -- under the influence of Nietzsche's philosophy -- began robbing and murdering people. In another case, the son of a Swiss atheist mother, who was brought up by her in the spirit of atheism, became a drunkard and choked his mother to death. From this the preacher concludes that the "anti-religious fools become uncanny criminals if they reject God and faith."

Firstly, you cannot base general conclusions on the strength of only two examples because -- by the same token -- judging by the behavior of Pronyushkina, one might deduce hastily that all Baptists are profligates. Mariya, an active Baptist, had a young lover for two years and admitted it. The affair ended only because the object of her passion found another woman.

Secondly, it is unthinkable to refer to Nietzsche and to attribute immoral ideas to the atheist ideology. The teachings of Nietzsche are no less foreign to a socialist regime than any religion. Suffice it to say that Nietzsche's philosophy was one of the foundations of Hitler's inhuman ideology which justified the brutality and extermination of millions of people not belonging to the super race.

Marxism-Leninism is the most consistent atheist ideology. However, when and where did the communists declare the permissibility "to commit crimes" on the basis of the "freedom from God and sin?" It is obvious that murder, robbery and other crimes are incompatible with the high reputation of a member of the Communist Party.

If you use statistics, rather than one or two examples, you will be readily convinced that in actual life things are contrary to what the Baptists are trying to prove. In the US, where Baptism is most prevalent, the crime rate increases constantly. You can find all the proof you wish in the US press. On the other hand, in the USSR -- the country of growing atheism -- the crime rate drops from year to year. This permits the curtailment of the administrative functions of the militia, courts and other government departments which are charged with the responsibility of fighting crime. Their duties are being transferred to the public self-government of the citizens of the socialist state because their consciousness has risen to an all-time high.

It should be pointed out that it is the social system, not religious ideology, that influences the gigantic rise in the crime rate in the US, or its decrease in the USSR. Religion here plays the role

of the tenth spoke in a wheel. In this respect the Baptists have not discovered anything new. They simply continue blowing the old horn of the churchmen and try desperately to attribute to their teaching the ability of controlling the low instincts of the people.

The Baptists particularly love to brag about their rejection of the use of alcohol and tobacco. Granted -- these are positive moral requirements. But they distort the truth when advertizing oneself? Listening to the speech of the "Tallin workman," one might gather that all the Soviet people -- with the exception of the Baptists -- are unrestrained drunkards and, in addition, that the craving for drink is an inherent peculiarity of the godless.

"In the oppressed and hopeless state, in which this country finds itself" -- the preacher continues to slander -- "drinking and dope are sort of natural results of the attempts of the people to find an exit from the dark corners of their indifferent and selfish souls."

First of all it should be pointed out that neither socialism, nor atheism is responsible for such vices as drinking. It is a residue of the regime of exploitation which was blessed by all of the major religions. In its basic activities the Christian religion supported the dissemination of these vices, let alone fight them. Christian holidays used to be followed by a free-for-all drinking. The Orthodox clergy in Rus' of old was a symbol of drunkenness, overeating and idleness.

Only with the advent of socialism did the fight to overcome these vices become an integral part of state policy and an important task of society. This struggle is conducted by all available means: by explaining, by administrative measures and by price policies. This activity is embracing the entire population of our country regardless of their attitude toward religion. Is it possible to compare this wide-front struggle with the pitiful sermons about the sins of drinking and smoking which the Baptists conduct among small groups of their adherents? Of course, not.

We have not been able as yet to eliminate fully the habits of the past. Some Soviet citizens still have them. But it is a crude slander on the part of the Baptist preachers to insist that drinking is a "natural" pastime of almost all Soviet atheists. This is done for a definite purpose -- to lure the trusting non-drinking and non-smoking people into the sect.

Even more absurd is the preachers' chatter about the "oppressed and hopeless spiritual state in which our country finds itself," about the "terrible darkness of the soul" of the Soviet man, etc. In reality everything is quite the contrary. During the years of the Soviet regime our country underwent the greatest cultural revolution. Millions of the workmen ridded themselves of darkness and ignorance. We are in first place in the world insofar as the educational level of the population is concerned.

However, according to Baptist moral principles, light is darkness, white looks black, and vice-versa. Education leads to godlessness, therefore -- according to Baptists -- education is darkness and ignorance is light. The "Tallin workman" clearly announces that "the world is

hurting into an abyss, together with all of its seemingly important and brilliant theories, inventions and discoveries." In order to save the world there is apparently only one way and that is "to see the true Light of God's Revelation," in other words -- to discard true science and to study the Bible. The Baptists invite mankind to go back to primitive existence.

Baptism refuses to see the vivid positive changes in the moral make-up of the Soviet men after the October Socialist Revolution. What patriotism, what self-denial was shown by our people in the struggle for freedom and independence of their country during the years of the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. How much creative initiative is being shown by the workers of town and village in trying to achieve new successes in the building of communism. Following the example set by Valentina Gaganova, thousands transfer to the backward areas of production in the interests of the common cause and disregard of personal interests. And yet, the Baptists consider them all as "selfishly loving only themselves" because they do not profess Christian religion.

Moreover, according to the lecture debate, the Soviet godless people look as gluttons and revellers who dance non-stop and give themselves up to other "earthly pleasures." And again it turns out to be due to the "emptiness of the soul and so as to divert one's attention from oneself and to forget oneself."

Supposing this is so, who in this country develops -- by leaps and bounds -- industry, agriculture, and culture? Don't tell me its the Baptists? Of course, not. It is being done by the millions of Soviet people to whom labor became a matter of honor, valor and heroism. They have the right to rest and cultural entertainment, and they love to sing and dance once in a while. That is the normal requirement of a man's system. However, where there are parasites and playboys whose only thoughts are of pleasures and entertainment we wage a persistent struggle with such people and not by means of sweet Baptist sermons about the sinful "earthly pleasures" but by a much more efficient means of convincing compulsion and coercion.

"Smoke, dance, eat, drink, make whoopee!..." cries the "workman" addressing the Soviet people-atheists and threatens them with God's punishment.

This appeal is directed to the wrong address!

By the way, it should be pointed out that this appeal bares the ideological limitations and wretchedness of Baptism. It reflects Baptism's "highest" moral principles. The lecture-debate does not include any mention of any other moral requirements. The Baptists are trying "to save" modern mankind by the preachers' fight against smoking, dancing, over-eating, drinking, and entertainment. Only short-sighted people can say such trash.

The "Tallin workman" decided to give even A. M. Gpr'kiy a Baptist "hair-do!" This is what he said in his speech:

"In certain decisive, tragic moments of life, the human-soul is powerless to hide its true aspect. And the real aspect of human life is nothing else but an irresistible longing to acknowledge and believe in

the living God. As a matter of fact I will now read to you the thoughts of the famed author Maksim Gor'kiy, which he harbored deep in his soul and of which he even dared to write:

I was cruelly deceived by life
And I weathered so many disasters
That the swarm of the dreams buried in the soul
Will never rise from the slumbers!
There are many of them. The crypt is so crowded!...
I have dressed them in the shroud of the rhymes
And above them many songs
I sang, as sad as moans...
Have sung -- and will now not disturb
Their death sleep, ever more...
Oh Lord, rest my soul
It is hopelessly ill...

"There it is -- hopelessness of the godliness!", concludes the preacher solemnly. The time comes when even an atheist must say! "Oh Lord, rest my soul!"

After a heart-rending story about conversion of the godless sailor to Christianity related prior to the above, according to representation by the "Tallin workman," the great proletarian author appears as a real repentant sinner. However, it is a wellknown fact that in a number of his works Gor'kiy uncovered with tremendous force the bigotry and hypocrisy of the clergy and the deceit and anti-social substance of religious ideology. Maybe, at the end of his life Gor'kiy changed his convictions? Of course, not. It is simply another Baptist falsification.

The above-mentioned quotation really belongs to Gor'kiy's pen. But it does not at all mean that he was turning to God.

By quoting this excerpt from "Sad Story," one of the early creations of the writer, the Baptists swindled. The story was first published in Samarskaya Gazeta (Samara Newspaper) in September 1895. The thoughts related in the poetry do not belong to the author but to the hero of the story, an unfortunate poet. By applying such methods any writer representing in his works various anti-religious persons may be shown as a believer. But this is meanness and deceit.

There is not even a hint in Gor'kiy's story suggesting any positive religious ideas. The expression "Oh Lord, rest my soul!" has nothing to do with the writer's views. No wonder that six months later the same Samarskaya Gazeta published Gor'kiy's story "The Bell" which has definite anti-religious motif.

Information reported in the lecture-debate was collected from all kinds of sources. However, not a single fact or occurrence is given in this Baptist masterpiece without distortion or falsification. Deceit and lie in every sentence in every line! Although not recommending that the rank-and-file Baptists read "secular" literature, see movies, or listen to the radio, the leaders of the sect conduct themselves differently. They search everywhere for anything that could be distorted or falsified somehow, in order to patch up their teaching, and utilize it for propaganda.

The Inside-Out Logic

As shown above the majority of the Baptist falsifications and jugglings can be easily unmasked when you look up the origins. However, there are such falsifications which are constructed on purely logical deductions. It is rather difficult for uneducated people to understand them as the methods of science and logic used there are completely distorted.

For instance, the text-book on logic discusses one of the errors which is commonly made in formulating the evidence. It is known as "thesis substitution" or, in Latin, "ignoracio elenchi." This mistake occurs when -- during the process of proving a thesis -- the argument gradually strays away unnoticeably to proving the other thesis. The science of logic teaches how to avoid such an error and shows the necessity of following the rule -- "...The thesis must remain the same during the entire process of proof." (N. I. Kondakov. Logika [Logic], Moscow, Academy of Sciences USSR, 1954, page 391.)

However, unscrupulous debaters, particularly bourgeois diplomats, often intentionally substitute the thesis when they are unable to prove it. They attempt to divert ostentatiously the attention of their opponents and begin proving a different point which has only superficial connection with the subject of the debate. Having proved a new thesis they begin to assure you that it was the original subject.

The Baptist preacher uses this "thesis substitution" in an attempt to prove the existence of God, immortality of the soul, miracles and other religious ideas which cannot be proved.

At the first sight it would appear that the physician was right when he said in the lecture-debate: "We are realists, we believe only in what we can see with our own eyes and feel with our own hands. Naturally, the same applies to God. Who has never been seen by anyone."

Actually, this thesis is not suitable for proving the non-existence of God. It was intentionally slipped into the mouth of the physician by the author of the lecture-debate, because it is easy to disprove it.

"Doctor, as a realist, you have particularly pointed out" -- said the "Tallin workman" -- "that you believe only what you can see and feel... Tell me, do you love your wife, and do you believe that you have a mind?"

"I guess I love and believe," replied the confused doctor.

"Well, neither I nor your friends here can see with our own eyes or feel with our hands your love for your wife or your mind... We have no accurate analysis of investigation of your spiritual activities; however, we do believe in their existence..."

Thus the thesis of the doctor was disproved. From this the preacher concludes that since there are things and occurrences which we cannot see or feel, consequently, there is God, although nobody ever saw or felt Him. And it must be pointed out that Pronyushkina and her spiritual "brothers" and "sisters," who are inexperienced in logical contrivances, are convinced of the indisputed correctness of such a logical deduction.

This logic is for the simple-minded. Sight and touch are only

two of man's five senses. Anyone can name, without thinking, scores of definitely existing things and occurrences which cannot be seen or touched. There are numerous methods of defining spiritual activity. At this moment, for instance, we cannot see or feel the author of the lecture-debate, but we are convinced that he does exist. But this does not mean that God also exists. It is not only the organs of the man's five senses that confirm the non-existence of God but also the mind of the man, the variety of machines and devices for exploration of the surrounding reality, the centuries-old experience of mankind, and objective regularity of the development of nature, society and the thought.

Evidence of the existence of God "with the help of Napoleon" is in the same category.

"Tell me sincerely," cried the "workman," "what would you call me if I would suddenly undertake to organize an army today to fight the invincible and well-known to all, but long since dead, Emperor Napoleon I?"

"Crazy," someone replied from the audience.

"I fully agree that such an undertaking on my part may be called crazy... If this is so, and if there is no God, then whom are you trying to fight, whom are you abusing and why?"

"Since Napoleon is dead, there is no sense in fighting him. The only sensible fight is the fight against something that exists. If you are fighting religion, that means that God exists!" This is the argument of the Baptists.

However, this again is the logic of a liar. The idea of "God" is substituted imperceptibly by the idea of "religion." In reality, religion does exist but God does not. There is no sense in fighting a non-existent God, but there is sense in fighting the existing religion. The struggle is being conducted against the false idea of God, which has deeply penetrated the consciousness of the people who believe.

Incidentally, the aggressive ideas of Napoleon I reigned over the minds of his compatriots for a long time. A lot of blood was shed for those ideas by the French and other peoples. Ancient Greek philosophers, the materialist Democritus and the idealist Plato, died more than 2,000 years ago. However, the struggle between the two philosophies bearing their names still continues in our time.

The ideas which take possession of the masses become a material force which exists regardless of the people with whom the ideas originated. The idea of God, together with an aggregate of religious ideas, exist in our country as a remnant of the past that was originated by the people who died long ago. Living people are carriers of these ideas. The struggle by means of the anti-religious propaganda is being waged not against God, but for the happiness of the believers. And it is an idle chore to try and extract from this the idea of the existence of God.

Here is the Baptist proof of the existence of God by means of "agreeing to suffer." It begins on the basis of a sound thesis, namely: Man is prepared to suffer for a true idea. He is not prepared to suffer

for a true idea. He is not prepared to suffer a lie. And here the author of the lecture-debate quietly manages to substitute the thesis.

"Which one of you would agree to die as a martyr for your idea that God does not exist?", asked the "Tallin workman" of the scientist lectureers. "I am certain that we won't find such volunteers. But hundreds of thousands of men have already died for the truth of the existence of God, and the new hundreds of thousands will rise to defend this truth at all times..."

Indeed, there are no fools that would agree to die to prove the idea of nonexistence of God. But can the blunt rejection of any stupid idea be considered an idea? Thus, one could advance an "idea" saying that a donkey is wiser than a man and offer all who disagree to suffer the death of a martyr to prove that the opposite "idea" is right. What is the sense of suffering and dying for such an "idea?" This is not an idea. The "workman" has again substituted the thesis, substituted a real idea with nonsense.

It is a different story when some positive idea contradicts the "idea" of the existence of God. Then, people may risk their lives in defending it. Giordano Bruno, who advanced the idea of the plurality of inhabited worlds, which denied the existence of God, was burned to death as a martyr. Under the threat of cruel tortures by the Christian inquisitors Galileo Galilei repeated again and again: "Still the earth revolves." So did thousands of other fighters for real ideas which denied the existence of God.

Certainly, people died for the "idea" that God exists. However, firstly, this "idea" was not based on knowledge but on blind, fanatical faith. Secondly, the mutually excluding "ideas" of different religions often clashed. For example, the Catholics tortured and eliminated the Huguenots, Moslems did the same to the Christians, and vice versa. All insisted that their "ideas" were the right ones. If you want to follow the logic of the Baptist preacher you would have to agree that the "idea" which incurred more suffering and sacrifices was the better one. However, this is clearly absurd.

Instead of the Russian expression "achievements of science and technology" you often encounter a figurative expression "miracles of science and technology." A preacher would use even this to prove the plausibility of the biblical legends.

"You call electricity and various theories miracles," the preacher admonishes the speakers. "Why do you maintain that the Holy Ghost is deprived of such a right? You are surprised that the donkey spoke in a human voice. Your famous monkey, transformed into a man, also speaks thousands of languages, tongues and dialects. And how about the carbon microphones and megaphones of radio loudspeakers? Aren't they spiritualized by man? The fact that the donkey spoke as man is not all; you will be interested to know that God can transform a man into a donkey which, in my opinion, is much more difficult".

The Baptist logic here is utterly primitive. Since "miracles" occur in science and technology, and scientists recognize this, "miracles" in general are possible. Consequently, God can create "miracles."

But the point is that "miracles", in the real meaning of the word, do not exist either in science or in technology. It is simply a figurative expression. Every creation of man, even the most wonderful one, made with the help of the science and technology, is based on the knowledge and utilization of the orderliness of the development of the matter; it is natural. The biblical "miracles" on the other hand, are basically unnatural and have no basis within nature. Any "miracle" of science and technology can be understood by any man, who can repeat it if he wishes. Any biblical "miracle" is tantamount to comparing an aspen stake with a finger. The preacher substituted the thesis.

However, such is Baptist logic. It is logic -- inside-out. It does what the real science of logic warns against.

The Baptists brag that anyone who joins their sect does so consciously and only after he has understood and accepted the righteousness of Baptist teaching. Allegedly, this is the reason why only adults may be baptized.

Having studied the lecture-debate we decided to talk to Mariya Pronyushkina in order to see how deeply she absorbed the substance of the "proofs" offered in the Baptist literary cooking. It appeared that she didn't even bother to understand them. The Baptist missionary is only able to repeat, like a parrot, the memorized formulas of the lecture-debate or to read from a manuscript. She could not say a single sensible word in defense of the advanced refutation. She accepts the inventions of her older "brothers" blindly, on faith unsupported by consciousness.

"Since it is written like that, it means that's how it happened. Everything is correct here," repeats Mariya in response.

The Baptists are offended when they are told that their teaching is represented by a system of views calculated for the dark uneducated people or as a means of clouding the consciousness. But, by her entire nature, Mariya Pronyushkina justifies such an accusation. She is not only unintelligent and uneducated, but the trouble is she does not wish to change. Having gone through only four grades, she does not want to study any further. The Baptists drove her to such a state in which she does not even attempt to think or reason.

The Baptists assert from time to time that their faith pays particular attention to the moral perfection of the people and that the members of their sect are all people with high moral principles. Indeed, Mariya observes their "highest" moral requirements: Not to drink, smoke, dance, glut, or go to the movies or theater. She is known as an exemplary active Baptist of the Kuybyshev Community.

However, aspirations for new daring are foreign to her. But she can speculate in apples, interfere in the family life of her former lover--doing it to such an extent that both he and his wife are compelled to write letters to her superiors at her place of work. She can lie shamelessly, trying to whitewash the improper behavior of her spiritual "brothers" and "sisters". Some special resourcefulness is evident in her figure and behavior.

Such is the moral appearance of this bearer of "high" moral principles. An unattractive aspect. In actuality, it does not differ

in anything from the make-up of the "Tallin workman" or from any other religious preachers. Comparison of the words and deeds of the Baptist activists characterizes very well the substance of this sectarian teaching.

As any religion, Baptism is opium for the people. Its ideologists excell and adapt themselves to the changing circumstances and invent still newer methods of influencing unsteady people.

The new Baptist literary cooking is another vivid example of such adaptability of modern sectarian teachings to changing social conditions, careful masking of the glaring discrepancies between their teachings and science, and the search for new methods of influencing the feelings and minds of unstable people.

NEW TASKS

[Following is the translation of an article by Ye. Postovoy, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldaviya, in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, Moscow, March 1961, pages 79-80.]

Until recently the atheist propaganda conducted by the social organizations of Moldaviya was limited mainly to lectures. However, due to a lack of trained propagandists, the number of the lectures given was rather insignificant.

At present the situation has changed. Cells and seminars of scientific atheism were organized and atheist schools were set up within the political-education system. This provided the solution of the problem of training atheist propagandists. For example, about 400 village activists -- students of the cells and seminars -- carry out atheist propaganda in Yedinetskiy Rayon and over 600 in Lipkanskiy Rayon.

The limits of anti-religious activities have been broadened considerably, while the methods became more diverse. In addition to lectures and reports, question-and-answer sessions are conducted and reader's conferences are being organized. The clubs and the Houses of Cultures frequently arrange "why-we-deserted-religion" evenings which are very popular with the people and arouse lively interest in the listeners.

It is a well-known fact that many of the believers do not go to the clubs, movies, or theaters and do not attend lectures. Therefore, party organizations of the Republic began individual work on religious people. The simple, sincere chats of the propagandists and agitators with the faithful yield remarkable results. Thus, during the past two-three years, over 1,200 persons broke with the sect of Jehovah Witnesses in Lipkanskiy Rayon alone. Judaic communities fell apart completely in Kalapashskiy, Leovskiy and Orgeyevskiy Rayons. Similar occurrences are numerous within the Republic.

Several years ago such cultural and educational establishments as theaters, Houses of Culture, clubs and libraries kept aloof from atheist education. At present they participate in this work more and more actively. The repertoires of the theaters, art activities and concert programs already include shows, sketches and other performances with an atheistic trend.

Several interesting movie serials and short stories on atheistic subjects were produced by the "Moldova-Film" studio. These include: "Apostles Without Mask," "From Darkness to Light," and others. The State Publishing House "Kartya Moldovenyaske" has published recently a number of works of local authors devoted to atheistic themes: Pravda o tore i talmude (Truth about Torah & Talmud), by F. Mayatskiy; Moya ispovedy

(My Confession) by I. Buymistruk, and Propovedniki t'my i mrakobesiya (Preachers of Darkness and Obscurantism) by A. Aleksandrov. Several collections of articles by former believers were also published, including Pochemu my porvali s sektoy iyegovistov (Why We Deserted the Jehovah Witnesses Sect), My navsegda porvali s sektoy baptistov (We broke with the Baptist Sect Forever), etc.

The atheists of Moldavia can already summarize the first results of their work.

Of late, attendance in churches, synagogues and houses of prayer has dropped. The craving of the people for culture and knowledge has enhanced the number of readers in libraries and the number of spectators and listeners at the auditoriums, movie theaters and lectures has increased considerably.

The churchmen were compelled to close several monasteries. Hundreds of former monks and other servants of the cult are joining in useful social work. Services were discontinued in many churches and houses of prayer. The sectarian organizations of "God's Forces" and "Innokent'yevtsy" have disintegrated.

However, there are still many shortcomings in the atheist education of the workers. One of these defects is the abstract, bookish enlightening approach applied to atheistic work. Certain propagandists and agitators frequently base their evidence not on life or science -- which disproves religious dogma most convincingly -- but on the argument of the assiduous readers of the Bible. Also, lectures and discussions on atheism are sometimes conducted among the people who do not believe in God anyway.

Many of our propagandists and agitators do not pay sufficiently serious attention to the material losses inflicted by religious rituals and holidays on the economy of enterprises and kolkhozes. On the days of local church festivals or other religious holidays, a considerable number of kolkhoz members do not work. The tractors, combines and other agricultural equipment stands idle. The kolkhozes and the state suffer great losses.

In their lectures and discussions, some of our propagandists fail to emphasize the necessity for putting the question of the struggle against religion on a war-like footing. They conceal the idea of communism being incompatible with religion and shade the fact that -- in the long run -- any religion serves the purposes of the reactionary forces. The facts of the infringement by them of the socialist laws are not properly aired in the exposure of the churchmen. There are frequent cases of interference by the cult servants in the school affairs where they (through parents and local "aktivs") force the children to attend churches and to refuse to drink milk (which the kolkhozes deliver free for lunch) on lenten days, forbid them to join the Pioneers and organize persecution of the teachers who participate in atheistic activities.

None of these problems should escape the attention of the atheistic propagandists who are urged to wage a more resolute fight against religious ideology which leads the Soviet people away from the practical goals of building the communism and inflicts damage to our common cause.

ADVANCE ON A WIDE FRONT

[Following is the translation of an article by N. Shilintsev and M. Ivanov in Nauka i religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, Moscow, March 1961, pages 80-83.]

Lipkanskiy and Yedinetskiy rayons are located in the northern part of Moldaviya. The following religious groups are active among the population of these rayons: Orthodox Church, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists and "Jehovah's Witnesses." Social organizations and atheistic propagandists wage a stubborn fight against religious vestiges and already helped many residents of these rayons to get rid of them. We would like to discuss this activity here.

The newspaper is the best mass rostrum and has the largest audience. Last year the social organizations of Lipkanskiy and Yedinetskiy rayons finally managed to get every family of Jehovah adherents to subscribe to and receive newspapers and magazines. The rayon papers, Leninets and Put' K Kommunizmu are in close contact with the lecturers, agitators and other propagandists of atheism and receive from them important and timely information.

The editorial office of the Yedinetskiy rayon newspaper Put' K Kommunizmu printed a letter from a former Jehovah adherent F. Pynzar¹ from the village of Buzduzhana. He wrote about what he saw in the Jehovah sect. The letter aroused many sectarians. Upon seeing this, leaders of the sect began spreading rumors to the effect that the letters printed in the paper were forged. Then the editor started printing photostat copies of the letters in his newspaper.

Having printed the letters from the people who broke with religion, the editors of the paper do not lose contact with them. Thus, after such a letter from A. Kazak, former leader of Jehovah's Witnesses in the village of Larga, Lipkanskiy Rayon, the editors told the readers of the spiritual growth of that man and of his work. Many of those who belonged to Jehovah's Witnesses have now become active village correspondents; among them are, Juliya Sheverdak, Elizaveta Buga, Aleksandr Kazak, and others.

Recently, the editors of the Lipkanskiy Rayon newspaper organized and published an appeal to the members of Jehovah's Witnesses signed by the former leaders of the sect.

In their appeal they stated: "We, the undersigned former executive members of the sect of Jehovah Witnesses, residing in Lipkanskiy Rayon, have decided to address to you the good word so as to help you to rid yourselves of the delusions of the adherents of Jehovah.

"In our time we also had been deceived by the heads of the sect; many of us lost our best years in the dark Jehovah mire, and today it

even hurts to remember those days. However, we do return to the memories in order to make you think over the question of what good you get out of being a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect and to what life you commit yourselves. When honest people rest or enjoy themselves after a busy day, you sneak through the alleyways to an illegal (nelegal'nyy) meeting, while some of you have to walk from village to village in the freezing or rainy weather on orders of your Jehovah leaders."

They wrote in conclusion: "We call upon you to break with the criminal sect and its leaders and to fight actively for our earthly cause. Man is not a chance-guest on this earth; he is the master and creator of all earthly blessings. We, the former sectarians, are now working in various branches of the economy and are glad to be useful to our country. Follow our example; do not deprive yourselves of human happiness. Man's life is beautiful only if it is lived properly. Drop this sect of obscurantism and evil, come from the darkness out into the sunshine and fresh air, and to an honest and sensible life."

This appeal was sent to all sectarians, and displayed in clubs, libraries, brigade camps and farms.

There is a "village correspondents room" in the office of every rayon newspaper, where showcases and exhibitions of newspapers containing scientific-atheistic materials are systematically organized. In addition to the rayon newspaper, the kolkhoz's own papers containing atheist articles are also displayed at the exhibitions.

The editors of the newspapers Leninets and Put' K Kommunizmu receive many letters of thanks for the sharp and interesting articles printed on their pages. Recently, the Lipkanskiy Rayon newspaper received a letter from kolkhoz member G. T. Bezhenar'.

"Dear Editorial Office:" -- he writes -- "Your newspaper helped me to get rid of religious dope. For this I thank you very much." Here is another letter which was written by the mother of Yuliya Sheverdak, a former sectarian who is now working in an industrial combine. "... I tender my motherly gratitude to the society of the rayon which helped Yuliya -- through your newspaper -- to escape from this frightful kingdom of darkness." Questions of atheistic education are often brought up at sessions of Soviets and at meetings of the executive committees. Thus, the Brichanskiy Village Soviet, in its June 1960 session, reviewed an application from A. S. Reznichuk whose wife joined the sect of Jehovah's Witnesses, deserted her five children and left home. Those participating in the session condemned the fanatical sectarian and the leaders of the Jehovah sect which made her take this step. The anti-social actions of the sectarians are discussed at enlarged meetings of the village executive committees being held in Yedinetskiy Rayon. In the village of Verkhniye Khologory, Jehovah sectarians I. Kushnir and B. Knopka were summoned to answer for the theft of kolkhoz property. This fact was utilized by the agitators for the purpose of exposing the activities of the Jehovah sect.

In Lipkanskiy Rayon special meetings are conducted with the Jehovah's Witnesses sectarians. Lectures on various subjects are given by Party and Soviet workers, teachers, physicians and agriculturists as

well as by the former Jehovah adherents. Recently, Stepan Burduzhan, former leader of the "Strefa" [transliterated from Russian] of Moldavia and Western Ukraine, spoke before a meeting at the village of Kotel'no.

Public courts have opened the eyes of many faithful to what is right.

Such a hearing was held in the case of A. Pikevich, head of the Jehovah underground in the village of Verkhniye Khologory, who was caught composing, reproducing, and distributing anonymous anti-Soviet letters. The court, which was attended by about 400 persons, actually sat in judgement of the Jehovah movement. A suit-case with a double bottom and double top-- constructed by Pikevich -- was demonstrated to the audience. Some of the letters, notes and leaflets written in the handwriting of the defendant about "slave labor in the USSR" and the "burning in crematories of the brothers of Jehovah's Witnesses who rejected military service." Exclamations of indignation were heard in the hall. Fellow villagers testifying in court spoke angrily about moral degradation of Pikevich, who deserted a wife and five children.

"Pikevich and I are of the same age" -- said old kolkhoz member Il'ya Nikiforovich Yakubovskiy. "We grew up together, but then we parted company. I always worked honestly. My work has been appreciated. The kolkhoz board granted me a pension. Pikevich, on the other hand, never really worked. He has done nothing for the society but harm."

Pikevich, a Jehovah's Witnesses adherent with a 30-year "seniority," admitted his crimes. He promised never to engage in hostile activities again and to break with the Jehovah's Witnesses... When Pikevich was pronouncing these words, someone in the auditorium shouted:

"No, it isn't enough that you yourself break with the sect. You must swear before the people that you will bring out to our way of life those whom you had previously pushed into that whirlpool!"

Shortly after the hearing ten persons broke with the sect. Among them were kolkhoz members V. Gavriluk, V. Iovitse, V. Chekan, and others.

The kolkhoz members especially like the anti-religious "evenings." Such themes as "Why We Broke With Religion" are, as a rule, most popular.

Recently, the Party organization of the Kolkhoz imeni Stalin of the village of Kotel'no, Lipkanskiy Rayon, organized an evening dedicated to the theme "Who Are the Witnesses of the God Jehovah?" The board of the kolkhoz managed to provide transportation for the people living far from the central estate of the kolkhoz, as well as for those working in the fields or on the farms. The evening had such an influence on the sectarians that some of them dropped their religious delusion. Yevgeniya Bazhuryan, an active sectarian, left the sect.

A similar "evening" was held in Lipkana, the rayon center. Deputies of the village Soviet actively participated in its preparation. Notices were posted and announcements were made by the local radio station. Tickets were sent out to the families of Jehovah's Witnesses. A photo-showcase was set up in the club auditorium. Literary display was organized. Former leaders of the Jehovah underground spoke before the faithful.

A very interesting atheistic propaganda is being organized by the

Oneshta village library. The readers help the library considerably by circulating books among the faithful. Agitators and propagandists working with individual Jehovah adherents take out library subscriptions and bring books to the families of the faithful.

Driver I. Balya, one of the regular readers of the library, was instructed to teach young Georgiy Asandi how to drive. Both, Georgiy and his family were Jehovah's Witnesses. I. Balya kept telling his pupil about the books he read and, finally, Georgiy became interested and asked his teacher to give him something to read. With great interest G. Asandi read Ovod (The Gadfly) by Voynich. That book was followed by the others. Shortly afterwards G. Asandi joined the library himself. The heart-to-heart talks of driver I. Balya and librarian K. Klyaburn did the trick: the young man deserted the Jehovah sect. At present he is helping his parents to get rid of Jehovah obscurantism.

Many of the village clubs and libraries have atheist rooms and corners equipped with literary exhibits, photo-showcases and other visual props. In the "Skynteya" kolkhoz of Parkovo Village, Yedinetskiy Rayon, the atheist corner organized by volunteers regularly supervises the activities of the agitators. Here they have a village atheist on duty daily to conduct discussions, consultations, etc.

An important place in atheist education belongs to the school. As we know, Jehovah's Witnesses forbid their children to participate in social life; therefore, the school conducts diverse non-scholastic work. For example, all students -- children of sectarians -- of the Tabany Village School, Lipkanskiy Rayon, are drawn into amateur talent activities. Free viewing of movies is organized for them. In the Korzheutskaya School of the same rayon, teachers of all subjects conduct discussions and reading aloud sessions on atheistic themes. Every grade has a children's library.

On religious holidays, the schools of the Yedinetskiy Rayon organize harvesting and village-improvement activities, conduct trips to the woods, amateur talent concerts etc.

On many occasions parents of Jehovah's Witnesses faith tore the Pioneer neckerchiefs and Komsomol badges from their children, whom they beat up unmercifully. These facts aroused the school social workers and became the subject of discussions at teachers', Komsomol, and Pioneer meetings. It was decided to conduct the Pioneer meetings at the houses of those students whose parents are members of Jehovah's Witnesses. The swearing-in of the new Pioneers, talks about the Pioneer's duties and the meaning of the red neckerchief, etc., are being conducted at these meetings. In Korzheutsky and other villages of this rayon it is now a normal thing to see a detachment of Pioneers marching with the colors, to the tune of the bugle and the beat of the drum, to the house of a sectarian. Here, out in the yard, in the presence of parents and numerous neighbors, a swearing-in ceremony of a new Pioneer is conducted. After that, as a rule, an amateur talent concert takes place. Children of Jehovah's Witnesses who were accepted as Pioneers actively participate in the concert.

There are many schools where sectarian parents are invited to attend special classes where the studies expose religious prejudices most

vividly.

A parents' university has been founded in the school of the village of Tabany, Lipkanskiy Rayon.

Seminars were organized in the political education classes of both rayons. Schools and clubs were set up for studying the fundamentals of scientific atheism. Such schools and clubs were organized in 18 of the 20 villages of Lipkanskiy Rayon.

The basic emphasis in the atheist education of the faithful is placed on working with the individual. The village activists -- communists and Komsomol members -- systematically talk with the faithful at home or at their places of work.

The party organization of the kolkhoz imeni Stalin in Yedinetskiy Rayon managed last year to break up a group of Jehovah's Witnesses -- 21 persons -- and almost all of the sectarians dropped the dogma.

V. G. Cheban, Chairman of the Village Soviet, Ye. Ya. Morey, School Director; and V. N. Kuku, Brigade Foreman of the First Combined Brigade, systematically visited the home of L. G. Yushan, leader of Jehovah's Witnesses in the village of Rotunda, Yedinetskiy Rayon, talked with him at length, and once asked him to speak at a kolkhoz meeting. L. Yushan agreed to speak on kolkhoz matters at the general meeting, but warned he would not say anything about the sect. That was the first victory of the propagandists. They soon achieved their goal: Yushan broke with the sect and his example was immediately followed by the others. Leonid Gavrilovich Yushan is now a respectable person in the village where he is working as an accounting clerk in the kolkhoz. He often exposes Jehovah's Witnesses at the question-and-answer sessions and discusses the matter with his former fellow believers on radio programs.

The propagandists spent a lot of effort in trying to convince V. V. Chebanitsa of the absurdity of Jehovah teachings, but all in vain. Then it was decided to send L. G. Yushan to talk to her. During the conversation he told V. Chebanitsa how he and the other leaders of the sect deceived the faithful by pocketing the money ostensibly collected for the "Fund of Good Hops." V. V. Chebanitsa was staggered by this revelation and asked for a little time to think it over. Soon afterwards she broke with the sect.

Persistent individual work of propagandists resulted in August of this year in the defection from the sect of M. Kh. Dodu, one of the most important leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses, the head of the "strefa" and member of the "Regional Bureau of the Western Jehovah District" which also includes Jehovah's Witnesses residing in the territory of Moldaviya. M. Kh. Dodu's example was followed by many other kolkhoz men -- T. I. Dragan, Ye. F. Dodu, Ye. F. Dragan.

Propagandists of atheism are quite numerous now; there are 65 of them in Lipkanskiy Rayon. Many of them have good jobs. For example, Mariya Puntya -- formerly an ardent Jehovah's Witness -- compelled 18 persons (who were previously signed up by her) to quit the sect. Stepan Burdyzhan, former head of the "strefa" in Larga village, tore 12 persons away from the sect.

The experience proves that when the fight against religious remnants is conducted on a united and wide front, it produces wonderful results.

WAYS OF THE PEOPLE

[Following is the translation of an article by F. Levchenko in Nauka i religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, Moscow, March 1961, pages 83-85.]

Many changes have taken place in the village of Krasnoarmeyskoye since Moldaviya became Soviet: a kolkhoz was organized; the elementary school was replaced with a ten-grade school, a library was opened, health centers, kindergartens and day nurseries were set up, and a new intelligentsia grew out of the local population. Only the house of prayer of the Baptists reminds one of the past. Looking at the people going to the church, Fedor Kirillovich Sava, Chairman of the Village Soviet, is trying to smooth over the unpleasant impression and remarks somewhat apologetically:

"Our people ceased to believe in God long ago. The majority of them stick to the religion out of habit only."

Of course, this argument is quite suitable if you wish to justify your own mistakes. The chairman himself knows that little has been done in the way of Communist education of the villagers. A beautiful lake was deserted the whole summer. Creation of a beach resort and boating station, organization of sports competition, etc., remained in the planning stage. The kolkhoz purchased musical instruments and the players were taught how to play. And what happened? The wrong people were brought in to the orchestra. They won't go to play at the club. Enticed with a long ruble they visit houses, playing at christenings and weddings.

But the main trouble is that the party organization of kolkhoz and the village atheists propagate Communist ideology very ineptly and impassively and approach the organization of the anti-religious activities somewhat routinely, instead of looking for the way to every man's heart.

The following event took place in the tractor brigade headed by Communist Mikhail Timofeyevich Zilezetskiy. The local Baptists drew tractor operator Grigoriy Rakiu into their sect. With the aid of his sectarian wife, they kept after him and finally Grigoriy began going into the house of prayer.

This unpleasant news staggered Zilezetskiy. "How could this happen," he thought sadly and remorsefully. "We have worked together for such a long time..."

However, Zilezetskiy found an excuse right away.

"They blamed everything on the brigade foreman, as if it is easy to try to supervise both production and the men".

Nevertheless, he decided to talk to the culprit. However, no heart-to-heart talk resulted. Casting down his eyes the tractor-operator muttered something unintelligible.

"You let down the collective," Mikhail Timofeyevich admonished him,

expecting an immediate repentance. But Grigoriy became sullen. Then another method was applied:

"Either you forget the way to the sectarians, or you will have to leave our brigade!"

After a while this threat was carried out. In order to preserve the good reputation of a leading collective, Rakiu was dismissed. Everybody settled down and let others worry about the man's education.

Replacement of education by shouting is not an infrequent occurrence in the "40-Year October" kolkhoz. At a dairy farm where the milkmaids decided to compete for the honorary title of "Collective of Communist Labor," Mariya Demchuk, a Baptist, applied for work. That was an opportunity for the Komsomol youth collective to try to re-educate Mariya in the spirit of atheism. Instead, she was told:

"Get out of your mind the sectarian chimera, otherwise we have no place for you."

The unfriendly attitude scared Mariya and she never came back to the farm.

With regard to the general attitude towards religious remnants and the Baptists, there are two extremes. Some of the activists go to great pains to keep away from the sectarians, while the others willingly associate with them without making any substantial effort, however, to rectify their mistakes. Communist Yemel'yan Ivanovich Verdesch, kolkhoz chairman, apparently sees everything through rose-colored glasses. For the past three years his chauffeur has been Nikolay Kiflyak, a Baptist, and for all that time the chairman has not helped the man to get rid of the influence of a foreign ideology.

"I told him to leave the sect," says Verdesch, trying to justify himself.

Possibly. However, having given good advice and seeing that it was not heeded, Verdesch didn't even try to change his chauffeur's mind. Moreover, when the chauffeur told him that Baptists were also for peace, for work, and for high moral standards, Yemel'yan Ivanovich accepted the argument as sound and was satisfied.

The Communist Party calls upon the people to activity, to creation, and to knowledge and instills confidence in themselves in their hearts. The "brothers" from the sect, on the contrary, instill in their victims a lack of confidence in their own strength and sow fanaticism, prejudice and superstition. What can you expect from the adherents of obscurantism to whom "wisdom of this world is insanity before the Lord." From this stems the zealous defense of ignorance and darkness. Sectarian Aleksey Stashok would not let his daughter Nadezhda attend the sixth grade. Another Baptist, Vasilii Yermakovskiy, left his three children with only elementary-school education.

Speculation and stealing flourish among the sectarians. A memorable hearing in the case of Baptist Yakov Gomenyuk was recently concluded in the village. This parasite collected from his fellow villagers over 20,000 rubles on the promise to obtain lumber for them. Naturally, he did not get the lumber and kept the money.

The Baptist house of prayer is just like a stale, swampy back-water.

However, the strange phenomenon is the fact that you can meet here a young fellow or a girl next to an old man. They hear about the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the virtue of Christ.

It would seem that local atheists should have opposed this with some counteraction. Alas, anti-religious work in the village of Krasnoarmeyskoye is neglected. The problem of anti-religious lectures was pondered over tensely and at length by Secretary Stepanov of the kolkhoz party organization.

Finally, he remembered: "Last year we had a lecturer from Kishinev. He gave the sectarians a good lesson..."

Pavel Ivanovich spreads his arms: "Actually, nobody approved my position as manager of the lecture group or as leader of the agitation collective. I carry this workload on my own initiative."

Strange as it may seem, the intelligentsia of the village, unfortunately, also considers the education of the people a "workload" not a first-rate responsibility or a noble duty.

Galan considers the list of the planned lectures and complains:

"We must prepare the lectures on new subjects but none of the specialists in agriculture would take this up. The kolkhoz leaders divorced themselves from the propaganda-by-lectures."

Apparently, for these reasons no special lectures were given for the women and very few for the youth and the elderly citizens, during the year.

The club in the village is small and poorly equipped. It would be advisable to utilize the main forces of the atheists in individual enlightenment work among population. However, agitators are active only during the elections. Nobody trains the agitators and they do not visit the homes of kolkhoz members for years.

Of course, the secretary of the party organization and the school director do not wish to recognize this. But you cannot escape the truth. Baptists Praskov'ya Kochervey and Mariya Chernaya have been working at the school as janitresses for many years. But nobody would move a finger to open their eyes to the nonsense of faith in God. There is no "Young Atheist" Club in the school and no atheistic education is being given the village Komsomol members. There are adherents of religious rituals even among the Communists. Naturally, they do not do this out of conviction, but out of habit; however, party organization must fight such habits.

By the way, the workers of the Karpinenskiy Rayon Party Committee look upon all this with a considerable amount of indifference. Their vigilance is lulled by reports on the number of "completed projects," where everything looks fine.

Meanwhile, the atheists of this rayon, and of the village of Krasnoarmeyskoye in particular, should borrow from the extensive atheist propaganda experience obtained in other rayons. Thoughtful work is being conducted in Strashenskiy Rayon. In order to tear the faithful away from the pernicious influence of the church and the sects, various activities are conducted here, including evening amateur performances, questions-and-answer sessions, meetings with front-rank workers of the Seven-

Year-Plan. Libraries organize reader's conferences on atheist books and renovate constantly their "atheist corners." But the main emphasis is on individual work among the faithful.

Dina Severin, a nurse at the Strashenskiy Health and Epidemiological Station, gratefully commends the rayon hospital workers who introduced her to social life and helped her overcome the influence of her Baptist parents.

Many of the faithful remember an interesting anti-religious evening at the village of Trusheny where former preachers of various sects were the speakers.

The rayon committee frequently gathers the atheists together to discuss and exchange experiences. Together they discuss the lectures, add local material to them, and work out collectively the new strategy of the fight against the remnants of the past in the consciousness of the people. On religious holidays the party organization of Strashenskiy Rayon conducts mass "voskresniki [non-religious Sundays], invite actors from Kishenev theaters, and organize interesting excursions. Thus, step by step they win the people over from religion and educate them to be active and conscientious builders of communism.

JEHOVAH LOSES HIS FOLLOWERS

[Following is the translation of an article by N. Karmalinskiy and A. Fel'dman in Nauka i religiya (Science and Religion), No. 3, Moscow, March 1961, pages 85-86.]

An ever-increasing number of people break with Judaism every year. The number of believers diminishes constantly. Foreexample attendance at the Kishenev Synagogue in 1960 was only 60-70% of that of the preceding year. A very noticeable fact is that not only do the rank-and-file believers break with Judaism.

Leaders of the Jewish community of the city of Leovo, Ya. Mikhaylevich, Sh. Khusidman, Z. Ochakovskiy, N. Balaban, F. Khaydler, and others came forth with a statement in the local newspaper announcing that they are completely severing their connection with the religion. "Let those who still believe in God, not reproach us, as sooner or later they will be convinced that we are right." Thus they concluded their statement.

In these modern days, religion is a vestige of the past. However, like anything that is dying out, it does not disappear in the twinkling of an eye. Moreover, having found favorable conditions in some places, religion can take root again. The so-called min'on (prayer in private houses) are organized on Jewish religious holidays in certain places where anti-religious propaganda is weak and inefficient.

Such an unregistered house of prayer (min'on) headed by a certain A. M. Oksman -- who declared himself a rabbi -- functioned in Brichany Village, Lipkanskiy Rayon, for a long time. In 1959 Oksman demanded from the faithful 4,000 rubles for letting them use his house for conducting religious rituals. After awhile he demanded another 3,000 rubles for reciting the prayers. Oksman was becoming more and more impertinent from day to day, imposing new extortions on the faithful, until they appealed to society, demanding that the house of prayer be closed.

A similar event occurred at Ungenakh. Here, Tsigel'nik and Germanskiy decided to work the field of the God Jehovah together. One provided accommodation for the synagogue, and the other declared himself a rabbi. The synagogue, converted by two slippery operators into a business enterprise, soon started to bring a very substantial revenue. This latter became the subject of a discord between the two "adherents" of Jehovah. Tsigel'nik, as the owner of the synagogue, demanded a larger part of the income. On the other hand, Germanskiy stood on his "rights," saying that he is a rabbi and recites the prayers and consequently, his "work" deserves a higher rate of pay. The quarrel became rather "hot" but intervention of the faithful themselves ended the activities of those charlatans.

A public court hearing was held in April last year in the case of the leaders of the Faleshtskaya religious community. The court gradually

untwined the clew of the non-pious deeds of rabbi Draznin, chairman of the community Teper, and their hangers-on. The hearing disclosed that the servants of the synagogue took advantage of the better feelings of the faithful and blackmailed them into giving them money for their own personal use. Cornered by the testimony of his former parishioners, Draznin was compelled to admit openly that the synagogue itself did not interest him in the least and that the only reason he served God was that that service provided him with a comfortable living. Collections were made not only in the synagogue, but -- contrary to the law -- the leaders visited the homes of the faithful and frequently demanded "donations" even in the streets.

Citizen Kul'diner's wife passed away. Teper demanded 3,000 rubles from the grief-stricken man for her burial. Only after much persuasion did Teper agree to conduct the ceremony for 1,500 rubles. Just before the casket was lowered into the grave, Teper asked for the money, threatening that he would stop the funeral otherwise. The chairman of the community began dividing the money with the attendants right there over the body of the deceased, which resulted in a revolting quarrel.

It is customary to collect the money at the synagogue in a plate. But the Feleshtskiye khapuzi [translit. from Russian] replaced the traditional plate with a tureen, because the plate did not seem large enough. Parishioner Zonis was once told to put 300 rubles into the tureen. Zonis gave only 50, saying that that was all he had on him. The 50 rubles were returned to him right there and then and he was forbidden to enter the synagogue forthwith.

Draznin and Teper concealed from finance organs the true size of their income in order to pay less tax.

A. V. Kozin, chief physician of the rayon hospital, told the court of the great efforts made by medical workers in the matter of saving the lives of children who had undergone, in Draznin's hands, the barbaric ritual of circumcision. Being completely ignorant man, Draznin performed this ritual operation under most unsanitary conditions, which often resulted in very serious complications.

Former believers Khaymovich, Resnik, Simon, and other testified that Draznin and Teper often used the synagogue for purposes other than the performance of religious rites. Draznin used the synagogue for conducting the anti-Soviet, nationalist agitation, and distributed slanderous fabrications of certain foreign radio stations. In 1956 he praised the armies of Israel which attacked Egypt in conjunction with the British and French imperialists. Receiving letters from his relatives in Israel, the rabbi read them aloud in the synagogue, adding his comments from which it seemed obvious that life there was the happiest.

The interference of the rabbies in the education of the growing generation, religious fanaticism whose victims are often the little children, all of this provoked the angry protests and indignation of the former believers of the Faleshtskaya Synagogue. In accordance with the will of the workmen, the court's verdict was public censure of Draznin and Teper.

Neither the hypocrisy nor the demagoguery of the rabbis nor the swindles

or dirty machinations of various rogues, will help the clergy-men keep any part of the Jewish population under the decrepit banner of Judaism. A total desertion of Judaism by the faithful Jews is inevitable.

I DO NOT WISH TO PLAY THE HYPOCRITE

[Following is the translation of an article by N. Tesler, a tailoring shop manager in the city of Kalarash, in Nauka i religiya (Science and Religion), No 3, Moscow, March 1961, pages 86-87.]

My parents -- deeply religious people -- were very strict in seeing to it that all the traditional instructions of Judaism were steadfastly observed in our home. As a result, my reverence for the Torah was blind and I believed with awe its every thesis. The strengthening of my faith was furthered by the stale atmosphere of the small pre-revolutionary settlement where the Jewish population suffering from poverty and persecution found their only consolation in the "religion of their fathers" in the belief in the Messiah, Who according to the rabbi, was expected to appear momentarily to save the people from centuries of suffering.

It seemed that it was my lot to remain an unfortunate pauper for the rest of my life. However, the advent of a bright summer day in 1940 changed everything, when the Soviet Army brought freedom to the workers of long-suffering Bessarabia. New happy life became in the little town of Kalarash. However, it did not last long, as the war started. During the difficult war years I thought a lot about the events of that terrible time. That was when the break came in my outlook. It is true, I had my doubts even before, but I always tried to discard them as sinful and sacrilegious. But now, having learned about the unheard of evil crimes of the Hitlerite thugs, I was deep in a thought. "Where are You, Almighty Jehovah?" I was asking myself. "Why do you permit man-like beasts to torture your chosen people? Why do you allow the mass extermination which freezes the blood of any honest man, why don't you make lightning kill the executioners? Why didn't the earth open its entrails to swallow up the gas chambers of Maidanek and Oswiecim [Auschwitz]? Where is your boundless charity? Why don't you fulfill the commandments with which you bound yourself with your people? Why?... But is there any use to appeal to you with all these 'whys'. Do you actually exist?"

"No," I resolutely answered myself. "It isn't going to be God who will sweep the fascist scum away from the face of the earth. It isn't going to be He who will save the Jews from total extermination. The rescue will not come from Heaven. It will be brought to the mankind -- including the Jews -- by the real, earthly, mighty anti-fascist forces led by the invincible Soviet Power."

My faith was shaken. However, upon my return to Kalarash, after the war, I agreed to join the synagogue "dvadtsatka" (group of twenty). I did not do that of my own free will but because many people asked me to. The false sense of shame prevented me from rejecting categorically such

propositions and from telling them honestly that I was not as faithful as they knew me to be before the war. I believe that this baseless and unjustifiable false sense of shame prevents many Jews from breaking all ties with the synagogue and Judaism, though they admit they are non-believers when alone with their conscience. That was what happened to me. I was ashamed to talk openly and honestly about my want of faith, even with the members of the group of twenty, including M. L. Gol'dman and Ya. P. Braslavskiy with whom I was friendly. I permitted myself to give only rare and vague hints. After a while I discovered that my hints did not cause any indignation among them but, on the contrary, were accepted by them clamorously and favorably. They were giving me similar hints too. Only years later did we muster enough courage to discuss the matter openly and it appeared that, for various reasons, all of us had lost our faith in God and in the sanctity of Torah long ago. It appears that we had been hypocrites trying to deceive each other for many years.

There was another reason why I participated in the affairs of the synagogue. As a member of the "group of twenty" I was offered to take charge of the financial aid to the aged and sick members of the Jewish religious society. At first, such a job seemed honorable and noble and I took it with the calm conscience. However, watching the behind-the-scenes life of a synagogue later on, I became convinced that the aged and the sick only get pitiful bread crumbs. The lion's share of the money donated by the faithful ends up in the pockets of the operators who seized power in synagogues and societies. I also realized that the meagre handouts of the synagogue are not only useless but that they humiliate and belittle the self-respect of the people at the time when the Soviet Government takes such good care of the aged, invalids and sick, and when the state allocates hundreds of millions of rubles to provide these people with the security of a pension.

Acquaintance with the behind-the-scenes life of the society further shook my faith.

However, the following event was the decisive factor in my final break with religion.

My old friend Khaim Davidovich Niron and his wife left for Israel, where they had a daughter. He intended to spend there the last days of his life. However, in less than six months Niron returned to the USSR and, having received back his apartment, he settled down in Kalarash again. One day he made a speech in the synagogue and told the faithful the whole truth about the "paradise" in Israel. The poverty and deprivation of the ordinary workmen of Israel are indescribable. The majority of the Jews in Israel are indifferent toward religion. Niron told us that stores in Israel sell pork meat, that on Saturdays people smoke, play cards, use all kinds of transportation -- things strictly forbidden by Judaism. Synagogue attendance drops every year. That was where I said to myself: In the "sacred land of the fathers" the Zionist bosses are doing their utmost to strengthen the faith in the God Jehovah and the rabbis exercise unlimited influence over the citizens. Well, if even that does not stop the majority of the Jews in that country from turning away from Judaism, then doesn't it follow that it is hardly sensible for us -- Jewish citizens

of the USSR -- to hang on to it?

It must be noted that atheist literature was instrumental in opening my eyes to a lot of things. I used to read it secretly; now I read it openly. However, I was helped by Communists Vaynshteyn, Koyfman and Kamyshev in making my final, the only sensible and honest, decision. The patient, wise and sincere discussions which these confirmed atheists conducted with me, showed me the way.

This is the road that led me -- a 65-year-old man -- to the renunciation of religious ideology. The sooner this road is traversed by the people who have not yet rid themselves of religious intoxication, the sooner our Soviet people will attain the cherished goal -- the building of Communism.